

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

***United States Attorney
Carol C. Lam***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - February 7, 2005

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that LATONYA MICHELLE TUCKER was sentenced today in federal court in San Diego by United States District Court Judge Marilyn L. Huff to serve 70 months in federal prison. Her confinement will be followed by three years of supervised release. TUCKER pled guilty on November 12, 2004 before Judge Huff to a second degree murder charge in the death of Jalen A. Ford, a thirteen-month-old infant entrusted to her care.

TUCKER is a resident of San Diego County who resided on Camp Pendleton at the time of the murder. TUCKER pled guilty, pursuant to a plea agreement, to the felony violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1111 -- a federal statute which covers murders which occur within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Bruce C. Smith, who is prosecuting the case, TUCKER admitted in her plea agreement that, on September 10, 2001, while residing on Camp Pendleton, she intentionally inflicted corporal punishment upon Jalen A. Ford, who was thirteen months old at the time.

TUCKER also admitted that she intentionally dropped Jalen onto a hard surface, causing a traumatic brain injury. Two days later, on September 12, 2004, TUCKER delivered Jalen to the Tri-City Hospital Emergency Room. Despite efforts by the medical staff, Jalen died soon after his arrival.

This case is the product of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

DEFENDANT

Latonya Michelle Tucker

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Section 1111 - Second Degree Murder (one count)
Maximum penalty: Life in prison; fine of \$250,000

AGENCIES

Federal Bureau of Investigation
Naval Criminal Investigative Service